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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/645,136	08/20/2003	Jeffrey Larson	101045.0001US1	7146
51832	7590	04/26/2007	EXAMINER	
JONES DAY 222 EAST 41ST STREET NEW YORK, NY 10017-6702			PHILOGENE, PEDRO	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3733	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		04/26/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/645,136	LARSON ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Pedro Philogene	3733		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 February 2007.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-13,15-24 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ . 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) Other: ____ .

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 1-13,15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because they are drawn to non-statutory subject matter. In claims 1 and 17, lines 5 and 4 respectively, applicant positively part of a human, i.e. "another end to be inserted into a first area of bone". Thus the claims include a human within their scope and are non-statutory.

A claim directed to or including within its scope a human is not considered to be patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The grant of a limited, but exclusive property right in a human being is prohibited by the constitution. *In re Wakefield*, 422 F.2d 897, 164 USPQ 636 (CCPA 1970).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-12, 15-18,20-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Branch et al. (6,945,933) in view of Koros et al. (5,944,658).

Branch et al disclose a retractor, as best seen in FIG. 14, comprising a first tissue retaining wall (22) coupled to a first guide receiving channel (248,252); and a second

tissue retaining wall (42) movably coupled to the first retaining wall; as best seen in FIG.14, wherein each of the retaining walls has a substantially flat side, as best seen at 25,45, wherein the first and second retaining walls are nested to one another, as best seen in FIG.1, wherein at least one of the retaining walls has a curved bottom edge, as best seen in the FIGS., the retractor further comprising a hinge (260,264) that couples the first and second retaining walls, the retractor further comprising a frame (246,250) having a mechanism that holds the retaining walls apart from each other, wherein the first and second guide receiving channels (248,252) comprises slot disposed in the frame.

It is noted that Branch et al did not teach of a first guide sized and dimensioned at one end to received within the first guide receiving channel and at another to be inserted into a first area of bone; as claimed by applicant. However, in a similar art, Koros et al evidence the use of a guide that is sized and dimensioned at one end to received within the first guide receiving channel and at another to be inserted into a first area of bone; as best seen in fig.4, to firmly hold the distractor blades in position.

Therefore, given the teaching of Koros , et al, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device of Branch et al; as taught by Koros et al, by incorporating a guide in the guide slot of Branch et al to firmly hold the distractor blades in position.

With respect to the method claims, the method steps, as set forth, would have been obviously carried out in the operation of the device, asset forth above.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 13, 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's arguments, see Remarks, filed 2/1/07, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-12 under 102 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Koros et al. Furthermore, the indication of allowability of claims 13-23 has been withdrawn. The examiner apologizes for any inconvenience.

Conclusion

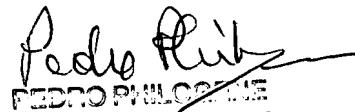
A shortened statutory period for reply to this action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Pedro Philogene whose telephone number is (571) 272-4716. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on (571) 272 - 4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Pedro Philogene
April 19, 2007


PEDRO PHILOCENE
4/19/2007